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King Fahd National Library Catalog-in-Publication Data

Abdullah, Abdul Rahman

Islamic dress code for women-Riyadh

64p, 14x21 cm ISBN: 9960-899-44-6

1-Women in Islam II-Title

219.1dc 1425/2442

Legal Deposit no.1425/2442

ISBN: 9960-899-44-6

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ISLAMIC DRESS CODE FOR WOMEN

Compiled by

Darussalam Research Division

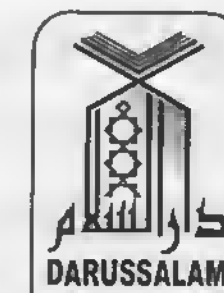
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allâh
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“O you who believe, protect yourselves and
your families from a fire whose fuel are
men and stones.” (*At-Tahrîm*, 66:6)

Contents

Publishers Note	07
Islamic <i>Jilbâb</i> (overgarment)	09
1. Large enough to cover the whole body	09
2. Plain, not decorative	12
3. Close in texture and opaque	14
4. Unperfumed	14
5. Should not resemble men's clothes	15
6. Should not resemble the disbelievers' clothes	16
7. Should not be conspicuous or ostentatious	18
Some other prohibitions	18
<i>Hijâb</i> (veiling)	21
1. Purification of the hearts:	23
2. Imposition of limits and punishments:	23
3. Marriage:	25
The definition of veil	30
The purpose of veiling	30
The rationale of veiling:	31
The conditions of veiling	32
The advantages of veiling:	33
The disadvantages of unveiling:	34
Recommendations:	34
Some important questions and answers concerning	
Islamic dress code	37
The Islamic <i>Hijâb</i>	38
Verily, Allâh is Beautiful and He loves beauty	39
Uncovering a woman in front of her husband's relatives	40
Uncovering one's face in front of the servant	43
Uncovering one's face while abroad	43
Short dresses for young children	45
The <i>Hijâb</i> of a young girl	45

<i>Hijâb</i> of an elderly woman.....	46
The <i>Hijâb</i> of a female servant.....	47
The female servant must wear <i>Hijâb</i>	47
<i>Hijâb</i> in front of non-Muslim women.....	48
Wearing <i>Hijâb</i> in the presence of the son-in-law	50
Woman cutting hair.....	51
High-heeled shoes.....	51
No harm in the presence of a blind man	52
Uncovering hair in front of non-Muslim women.....	52
Wearing light colored and short dresses	54
Wearing gloves.....	55
Shaking hands with women	56
Ridiculing woman's dress code	56
A wig for beauty	57
Plucking eyebrows and growing fingernails.....	58
The Muslim women of that land must not obey its rulers	58
Wearing tight clothing and white clothing.....	60
Being held accountable for what one wears.....	61
There is no harm in joking as long as it is truthful	61
Wash or wipe over the hair?	61
Treatment by a male doctor	62
Circular shaped gold jewelry	62
Does a woman act as a <i>Mahram</i> for another woman.....	63

Publishers Note

In our world of chaos and confusion concerning the unending problems of sexual abuses and perversion, most of mankind, who does not have the benefit of Islamic knowledge and guidance, has all but given up hope on how to come to terms with this intractable of all problems.

Men who are embarrassed to face their own weaknesses boldly view the most lewd displays of psychologically damaging visual presentations. Women desperate for fame and fortune allow themselves to be presented as bait for the crudest commercial benefits. That which is naturally abhorrent becomes common place with the exposure and constant bombardment of illicit graphic exhibitions. What is the way out of this dilemma? How can we reclaim our self-respect and the respect of our community?

We have to forego the thrill of uncovering that, which was meant to be covered and we have to forego the thrill of exposing that, which was meant to be hidden. If we don't, the disaster that accompanies these crimes will be upon us as a whole. We will pay, our children will pay and our children's children will pay. This is certain.

Thankfully, as Muslims we have the guidance on how to avoid these problems from the beginning if we follow the laws set out for us by Allâh Who knows His creation. Learning the history of those who came before us and who have come to disaster and seeing contemporary non-Muslim societies being devoured and destroyed due to lack of guidance and knowledge should make us rush to the solutions that Allâh has provided for us. Prevention is better than cure.

Darussalam presents *Islamic Dress Code for Women* as a solution to one of the most difficult problems of our time. There is no doubt that woman is an object of beauty. This beauty is a

very powerful force; Allâh has prescribed how this beauty must be dealt with so that it becomes a force for good and not a source of destruction. Actions are judged by intention in Islam and as such the intention of men concerning the beauty of women must be constantly guarded. The lowering of the eyes by men is a physical act, but without the intention of doing so to protect one's piety and obeying Allâh, we have stumbled and failed. The struggle to be chaste is the duty of both male and female and we have to cooperate in this struggle by following the very clear guidelines that Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ have set for us.

Abdul Malik Mujhaid
General Manager

Islamic *Jilbâb* (overgarment)

Relevant Qur'ânic Verses and authentic Prophetic traditions lay great emphasis on the observance of the woman's dress code. It is only by observing the Islamic dress code that modesty can be maintained. Islam stipulates certain conditions and requirements of the Islamic *Jilbâb*,¹ or woman's outer garment, that the *Muslimah* must observe when going out in particular. When the *Muslimah* goes out, she must wear an outer garment to cover the clothes she is wearing as well as any other beauty enhancements. Woman's *Jilbâb* may be considered proper and Islamic as long as it meets the following requirements:

1. Large enough to cover the whole body.
2. Plain, not decorative.
3. Close in texture and opaque.
4. Unperfumed.
5. Should not resemble men's clothes.
6. Should not resemble the disbelievers' clothes.
7. Should not be conspicuous or ostentatious.

It should be borne in mind that some of the above conditions apply to men also. If they are not met, the dress becomes unlawful to wear.

1. Large enough to cover the whole body

The reference to this requirement is in the Words of :

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ

¹ *Jilbâb*, literally means, a thing that prevents, debars, conceals or hides, because it prevents seeing or beholding. But in relation to women in Islam, it signifies women's outer garment.

زَيْنَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّبِيعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْأَرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ [النور: ٣١]

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their *Furûj* (private parts), and disclose not their adornments except only that which is apparent, and that they should draw their headcovers over their *Juyûb* (bosoms), and that they disclose not their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or what their right hands possess,² or such of male attendants who have no sexual desire, or young children who have not attained the knowledge of women’s private parts. And that they should not stamp their feet lest what they hide of their ornaments be known. And turn you to all together, O believers, that you may be successful.” (V. 24:31)

***Khimâr* (headcloth), or headcover**

This is the cloth which covers all of the hair on the head, while the word, ‘*Juyûb*’ (pl. of *Jaib*) means not only the bosom, as commonly thought, but it includes the neck too. Imam Al-Qurtubi, an eminent Qur’ân commentator, states:

“Women in those days used to cover their heads with the *Khimâr*, throwing its ends on their backs, behind their ears leaving the neck, and the upper part of the chest uncovered, just as Christian women used to do. ,

² The possession of the right hand are the bondsmen and bondswomen.

...er on, enjoined the Muslim women to cover with the *Khimâr* the upper part of their chests and the necks as well.”

...’s Words: “And they should not stamp their feet,” indicate clearly that woman’s feet must be covered by the outer garment too. Women, in those days, used to wear anklets, and they would attract attention by making them tinkle together when stamping their feet.

Abdullâh, son of ‘Umar bin Khattâb رضى الله عنهما reported that ‘s Messenger ﷺ said:

“On the Day of Resurrection, will not look at the man who trails along his garment with pride.” Thereupon, Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها asked, “What should women do with their garments?” The Prophet ﷺ said: “They should lower their garments a hand span,” (half their shins down). Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها further said, “Women’s feet would still be uncovered.” ‘s Messenger ﷺ replied: “Let them lower them a forearm’s length, but not longer.” (At-Tirmidhi)

The above Verse (24:31) quoted from *Sûrat An-Nûr*, gives specific detailed information as to what a *Muslimah* (Muslim woman) must wear to cover her body in the presence of strangers and non-*Mahram* relatives; whether indoors or outdoors. The Verse lists also the people with whom a woman is permitted to be less inhibited. While the following Verse quoted from *Sûrat Al-Ahzâb* commands the *Muslimah* to wear the *Jalbâb* (overgarment), be it a coat or a cloak, and draw it around her body.

Allâh says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾

[الأحزاب: ٥٩]

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters, and the

women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies, that is more proper that they may be distinguished³ and not be molested. And Allâh is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (V. 33:59)

The first Verse, clearly makes it incumbent upon women to conceal their beauty and adornment from strangers except that which might show unintentionally; such as the ring and the lower hem of the dress, and the like.

Covering the face and the hands was the practice of the Prophet's wives and other pious women during the time of 's Messenger ﷺ. Asmâ' رضي الله عنها said:

“We used to cover our faces from men.” (*Al-Hâkim*)

‘Āishah رضي الله عنها said:

“May Allâh grant the women of the *Ansâr* (the original Muslims of Al-Madinah), His Mercy, when Allâh revealed His Words, ‘And that they draw their headcovers over their *Juyûb*,’ they tore a portion of their wrapping garments and used them as *Khimâr* (headcloth).” (*Sahih Al-Bukhâri*)

2. Plain, not decorative

The Words of :

“... and that they disclose not their adornment ...” (V. 24:31) apply in general to the outer garment, that is, it should not be decorative, colorful, conspicuous or eye-catching. Allâh says:

﴿وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى﴾ [الأحزاب: ٣٣]

“And stay in your homes, and commit not *Tabarruj* (self-display) like the *Tabarruj* of the *Jâhiliyyah*.” (V. 33:33)

³ The Muslim women were commanded to cover themselves up that they might be recognized as free women, and be distinguished from the pagan women and the slave-women, and be safe from being harassed or molested

Tabarruj of a woman is displaying her beauty and ornaments to strangers or men distantly related to her, and wearing in public, make-up or whatever may excite men's lust.

The purpose of *Jilbâb* is to conceal the details of the woman's body and her finery which she employs to enhance her appearance, but when the *Jilbâb* is colorful and decorative, it becomes an ornament in itself and defeats its own purpose.

In his renowned book, *Al-Kabâ'ir* (the Grave Sins), Imam Dhahabi asserts:

“Among other things for which a woman would be cursed, are disclosing the fineries which she wears under her outer garment, wearing perfume in her outings, wearing a colorful outer garment, or a short cloak. *Tabarruj* includes all these things. Allâh the Exalted hates *Tabarruj* and the women who practice it.”

Tabarruj is so abhorrent that Allâh's Messenger ﷺ considered it equal to *Shirk* (polytheism), fornication, stealing, and other reprehensible acts. ‘Abdullâh bin ‘Amr رضي الله عنه said:

“Umaisah, daughter of Ruqaiyyah came to Allâh's Messenger ﷺ to give him her pledge of allegiance for Islam. He said to her, ‘I accept your pledge of allegiance on the conditions that you will not associate partners with, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill your children, nor commit a scandalous charge that you yourself forge, nor wail the dead, nor commit *Tabarruj* like that of the old *Jâhiliyyah*.’” (*Ahmad*)

‘Abdullah bin ‘Ubaid رضي الله عنه reported that Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said:

“There are three people about whose evil fate you should not feel sorry: a man who seceded from the assembly of the Muslim *Ummah*, disobeyed his *Imâm* (the ruler of the Muslim *Ummah*), and died in that state; a slave who ran

The definition of veil

Veil is legitimately defined as the dress that covers the whole body of the woman including her head, face, hands and feet. It should be long, loose and plain not defining her shape. Veil has been prescribed for women to block the road to sin. In short, veiling is a source of covering the face, hands, feet and other parts of the body. Allâh says:

﴿وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ خُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ﴾ [النور: ٣١]

“And they should draw their veils over their bosoms.”
(24:31)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِيكَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلِيبِهِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ﴾ [الأحزاب: ٥٩]

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (veils) all over their bodies (except eyes to see the way). That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed.” (V. 33:59)

The purpose of veiling:

The purpose of veiling is to safeguard woman from the biased looks of men and provide her a pure atmosphere at home so that she can perform her household duties properly and contribute to improve the whole society as Allâh says:

﴿وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ﴾ [الأحزاب: ٣٣]

“And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the former times of ignorance.” (V. 33:33)

History shows that the children, who were brought up by their mothers in observance of the social values and religious obligations, later became the leaders of the nation. They admitted that the credit of their booming career goes to their mothers who bestowed on them the qualities of sincerity, faithfulness, honesty, self-reliance

social service; and encouraged them to continue their education. Veiling gives an esteemed position to woman and protects her from sexual harassment by people. On the other hand, a woman, who displays her beauty and wears tight, short and transparent clothes, attracts men towards her. Consequently, they try to exploit her by using all possible techniques. Sometimes, woman also becomes weak and surrenders herself to the lust of men. Veiling provides security to woman and promotes a pure atmosphere in the society. But those who consider themselves as modern people, consider it a disgrace and construe it as shackles for the woman. In comparison to the right and wrong, this world and the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell, the observance of veiling is much smaller matter.

The rationale of veiling:

Woman is Allâh's beautiful creation. On one hand, she satisfies man's sexual desires and on the other hand, she plays a significant role in the growth of the human generations. No doubt, woman has a great attraction for a man. Due to this attraction, it is feared he will indulge in sins. Therefore, Allâh has forbidden man strictly from fornication and adultery. He has forbidden woman from exhibiting her charm. Regarding make-up and perfume, it is permissible for woman to wear them in front of her husband and closely related members of the family as Allâh says:

﴿وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ﴾ [النور: ٣١]

“They will not reveal their adornment except to their husbands or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim) women.” (V. 24:31)